

Smith, Watts & Company

Consulting and Governmental Relations

MEMORANDUM

To: Norm King, Executive Director, San Bernardino Associated Governments

From: D.J. Smith

Date: August 27, 2003

Subject: San Bernardino Measure I Regional Baseline Poll – Summary of Results

Per your request, the following is our summary of the key Measure I baseline poll results and our analysis for your information. As always, please let me know if you need any additional information or have questions.

Poll Objectives

The objectives of this voter opinion research project were as follows:

1. To accurately and objectively test the feasibility of asking the voters to extend the half cent transportation sales tax in San Bernardino County for a period of 30 years.
2. To test key variables that relate to the intensity of voter opinion regarding such a tax extension, such as the importance of transportation issues versus other community issues, the support for key transportation policies or projects that might be included in such a ballot measure, and other related issues.

Methodology

This poll was based on a 25 minute, 1000 sample size telephone survey conducted between July 3 and July 15, 2003. The sample was drawn from the County Registrar of voters who actually voted in the last two General Elections and from new registrants since the last General Election to insure that only the most likely voters were polled.

The large 1000 sample size gives the county-wide results a degree of variation of only 1-3 percent – in other words, the polling results provide a very high degree of reliability. The sample also accurately reflects the demographic make-up of likely San Bernardino County voters in terms of sex, age, party affiliation, geographic distribution, etc.

Summary of Results

The following represents raw results regarding key questions in the poll:

- ❑ San Bernardino County transportation officials are currently in the process of developing a long-term transportation improvement plan for the County. In 1989, San Bernardino County voters approved a 20-year half-cent sales tax to pay for County transportation improvements. Are you aware of the local half-cent sales tax?

Yes/Aware.....29

No/Not Aware.....71

- ❑ This sales tax, known as Measure “I”, expires in 2010. Would you support or oppose extending the half-cent San Bernardino County sales tax for 30 years to pay for additional County transportation system improvements and maintenance?

Support.....63

Oppose.....27

No Opinion.....10

- ❑ The ballot question you could be voting on reads as follows:

Measure “I”, Local Transportation Improvement Program.

To relieve transportation congestion, improve safety and air quality and match state and federal transportation grants, this measure authorizes extension of the current San Bernardino county half-cent sales tax to:

- widen and improve Routes 10, 15, 60, 210, 215, 395; and improve existing on/off ramps on I-10 and I-15;
- maintain city streets and county roads;
- expand transit services for seniors and disabled persons;
- expand bus and Metrolink commuter rail service;
- authorize bonds to expedite and finance improvements;
- and conduct independent yearly audits to ensure all voter mandates are met.

Would you vote “yes” or “no” on this ballot measure?

Yes.....76

No.....19

No Opinion.....5

	YES	NO	No Opin	
☐ a1. Are local taxes in San Bernardino County being well spent by local governments.....	27	45	28	
a2. Could you afford extending the County’s current half-cent transportation sales tax for an additional 30 years.....	70	24	6	
a3. Are you satisfied with how the current half-cent transportation sales tax funds have been spent.....	39	34	27	
a4. Do you have confidence in local political leaders to spend the county half-cent transportation sales tax funds efficiently.....	40	48	12	
a5. Are you familiar with any road or transit improvements paid for with the county half-cent sales tax revenues over the last 10 years.....	44	51	5	
a6. Do you think building new road and transit projects will significantly reduce traffic congestion.....	66	29	6	
a7. Do you think improving the county transportation system will encourage unwanted development.....	46	41	12	
a8. Do you think improving the county transportation system is a good way to increase the number of local jobs and improve the county’s economy.....	75	20	4	
☐ Would you give a high, medium or low priority to ____ (a) ____?				
	HIGH	MED	LOW	NO OPIN
a1. maintaining streets and roads	65	30	4	1
a2. expanding bus service and frequency of service	35	38	22	5
a3. reducing traffic congestion	73	18	8	2
a4. building separate bike lanes and striping local roads for bike lanes	31	29	39	2
a5. expanding Metrolink commuter rail service to Los Angeles and Orange Counties	53	24	19	5
a6. building new roads and freeways	54	26	18	3
a7. constructing bridges or underpasses to separate railroad tracks from streets	54	25	19	3
a8. improving safety on streets and roads	75	17	6	2

a9. adding carpool and bus lanes on freeways.....	57	22	19	2
a10. adding separate truck lanes on freeways	59	22	17	2
a11. enacting growth policies that protect the environment and open space	50	31	17	2
a12. requiring new development to pay a portion of new transportation improvements	57	26	13	3
a13. purchasing underdeveloped open space for parks, recreation and wildlife preservation	51	28	19	1
a14. improving pedestrian and sidewalk safety	62	24	13	1
a15. minimizing traffic stops caused by trains	41	28	27	4
a16. widening existing freeways	57	28	13	2
a17. synchronizing traffic signals	69	20	10	1
a18. providing road capacity for emergency vehicles to move quickly during rush hours	71	18	9	2
a19. providing special transit services for elderly, disabled, and other people who can't drive	62	28	9	1
a20. constructing a high speed rail system connecting major southern California cities and airports (including Ontario) to the Bay Area, Sacramento and Nevada	48	28	22	2
a21. providing discounted transit service fares for full-time students under 19 years old	50	31	17	1
a22. including soundwalls and landscape improvements in road improvement projects	38	37	24	2

- ❑ Now that you've heard some of the projects being considered, would you support or oppose extending the San Bernardino County half-cent sales tax for 30 years to pay for needed count transportation system improvements?

Support.....75
Oppose.....21
No Opinion.....4

- ❑ Given the limited amount of funding available for San Bernardino County desert communities, which of the following two choices would be your higher priority?

...constructing new roadways to prevent worse traffic congestion?34
or filling potholes and maintaining streets and roads?.....62
No Opinion.....4

- ❑ Again, given limited amount of funding, which one of the following choices would be your higher priority?

...paving currently unpaved, dirt and gravel roads.....20
or repaving and repairing existing local streets and roads.....76
No Opinion.....4

- ❑ On a related issue. Should the subject of providing special transit bus services for senior citizens, the disabled, and people who can't drive themselves be given a high, medium or low priority in the new plan?

High.....58
Medium.....32
Low.....9
No Opinion.....1

- ❑ As an alternative, many transportation planners are looking to widen existing freeways and using the additional lanes exclusively for carpools and a new high-speed commuter bus service during morning and evening peak commute hours.

Would you support or oppose investing more transportation money into building new freeway lanes for a new high-speed commuter bus service if the cost was significantly less than light rail train systems?

Yes/Support.....60
No/Oppose.....29
No Opinion.....11

- ❑ Another proposed alternative is to widen existing freeway lanes and allow all drives, including solo drivers, to use the new freeway lanes during peak commute hours.

Which alternative would you prefer?

.....allowing all drivers to use new freeway lanes during peak commute hours.....39
or using new freeway lanes for carpools and a new high-speed commuter bus service
during peak commute hours.....55
No Opinion.....6

Conclusions

In my opinion, based on an initial analysis of the results of this poll, it is feasible for an **extension** of the current half-cent sales tax in San Bernardino County gaining the necessary 2/3 vote required for approval. I strongly recommend that SANBAG proceed with putting a measure on the November 2004 ballot, if the following conditions can be met prior to August of 2004:

1. SANBAG must continue to effectively communicate past program accomplishments regarding the current sales tax program as part of a public education program.
2. SANBAG must develop an equitable, geographically and technically balanced, visionary, and understandable program for presentation to the voters over the next year that directly relates to voter frustration with traffic congestion and concerns over maintenance and operation of the existing highway and transit system.
3. SANBAG must effectively communicate specific project and program costs and benefits of any extension program adopted by its Board in a public education program targeted to specific communities in the County.
4. It is apparent from the survey results that SANBAG needs to consider development of a uniform, fair and reasonable approach regarding a portion of transportation development to be paid by new development fees throughout the County. I recommend that this issue be resolved through the appropriate SANBAG committee that has been convened to consider the matter.
5. Finally, it is very important that other local tax measures not compete with the extension on the same November 2004 ballot. Bond measures will not impact the extension, but other tax issues would be viewed cumulatively by the voter and impact the outcome negatively.